

31. Accept and file the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission report for calendar years 2023 and 2024, and take related actions ()



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Board of Supervisors

Subject: Biennial Report of the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission

Meeting Date: February 11, 2025

Formal Title: Accept and file the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission report for calendar years 2023 and 2024, and take related actions

Recommended Actions

- 1) Accept and file the report prepared by the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission highlighting their activities during calendar years 2023 and 2024; and
- 2) Direct the chair to thank the members of the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission for their work on behalf of County government.

Executive Summary

Accept and file the report prepared by the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission highlighting their activities during calendar years 2023 and 2024.

Discussion

The purpose of this report is to highlight the activities, accomplishments, and future goals of the board during calendar years 2023 and 2024.

Financial Impact

This recommended action does not have a financial impact.

Strategic Initiatives

N/A

Submitted By:

Felipe Hernandez, Chair

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY
Environmental Health Division

Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission

(831) 454-2022 <http://www.scceh.org>



FISH AND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION Report for Calendar Years 2023 and 2024

Roles of the Commission

The Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission (Commission) advises the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors (Board) on issues relating to fish and wildlife and recommends projects for funding with the County's portion of Fish and Game Code fine monies and judgments.

Meeting Dates, Time, and Location

The Commission generally meets seven times a year in February, March, May, June, September, November, and December at 7:00 pm. The Commission has used a hybrid format using both Teams and in-person at the Solarium at 1060 Emeline Ave, Santa Cruz.

Commission Structure

As of December 31, 2024, the Commission consisted of:

| District | Commissioner | Commissioner |
|----------|----------------|--------------------|
| I | Chris Berry | Samuel Adelson |
| II | <i>Vacant</i> | David Somerton |
| III | Liz Alter | Jon Jankovitz (C) |
| IV | Daniela Suarez | Brooke Sampson |
| V | Jenni Gomez | Jen Michelsen (VC) |

Commission Staff

Sean Abbey, Water Quality Specialist with Environmental Health, is the Staff Liaison assigned to the Commission.

Annual Goals and Accomplishments – 2023 and 2024

Over 2023 and 2024, the Commission considered and made recommendations regarding a wide range of topics including; the County Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, the County Streamwood program, the County Housing Element, reintroduction of beavers, requiring a descending device when fishing, expanding the significant tree ordinance, species protections at Cotoni Coast Dairies, County management of invasive species, response to sick pelicans, documenting invasive Arundo in the county, environmental impacts of tobacco waste, invasive broom removal work, and the potential sewer projects in Boulder Creek. The Commission also wrote letters to the Board of Supervisors on 4 topics.

1. Recommend county support for invasive species management.
2. Support for a ban on the sale of filtered tobacco products
3. Encourage the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to update its California special-status and sensitive species list
4. Recommend expansion of the Significant Tree Ordinance

One of the primary tasks of the Commission is the Public Grants Program, an important funding source that supports local organizations with small projects and outreach programs. This program relies on a portion of the revenue generated from the enforcement of the Fish and Game Code, through actions of local California Department of Fish and Wildlife wardens and the County's District Attorney.

- In 2023, the Commission recommended \$16,000 in funding for four (4) projects that contributed to: native animal rescue operations, injured bird rescue and rehabilitation, creation of an environmental stewardship program for students, and removal of invasive Broom in a stand of Santa Cruz Cypress trees.
- In 2024, the Commission recommended \$18,500 in funding for four (4) projects that contributed to: native animal rescue operations, injured bird rescue and rehabilitation, creation of an environmental stewardship program for unhoused people, and continued operation of salmonid monitoring equipment.
 - In addition, the commissioner recommended \$8,560 in emergency funding to support two agencies responding to [the Pelican Crisis in April-May of 2024](#). During this period, large numbers of starving pelicans appeared in Santa Cruz County that required rehabilitation.

Public Comments

The Commission provides a forum for members of the public to voice concerns or share information about fish and wildlife related issues. In the past two years, the Commission heard public comments that: support reconnecting salmon with their watersheds, support enforcement on illegal streambed alterations, voice concern for nesting birds on the Laurel street bridge, voice concern about flooding in public parks due to vegetation in the river, support renewing county code sections 16.90 and 16.92, support expansion of the Significant Tree Ordinance, support beaver reintroduction efforts, and support the use of current sensitive species lists in Cotoni Coast Dairies.

Future Goals

The Commission scheduled 6 meetings for 2025 and plans to address a range of topics including, Measure Q implementation, land and open space conservation and management, invasive plant management, climate change and wildlife conservation, coho salmon and steelhead recovery planning, and riparian corridor enhancement.

The Commission will continue to provide a forum for public input regarding fish and wildlife issues.

Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission Attendance 2023 and 2024

2023

| Commissioner | Feb | April | May | June | Sept | Nov | Dec |
|---------------------|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Berry | P | P | P | P | E | P | P |
| Adelson | P | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| Somerton | P | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| Barry | --- | --- | --- | --- | P | E | P |
| Alter | P | R | P | P | P | P | P |
| Jankovitz | P | P | P | P | P | R | P |
| Sampson | --- | --- | --- | --- | P | P | P |
| Suarez | --- | --- | --- | --- | P | P | P |
| Gómez | P | P | P | P | R | P | P |
| Michelsen | P | A | P | P | P | A | P |

2024

| Commissioner | Feb | March | May 2 | May 22 | June | Sept | Nov | Dec |
|---------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Berry | P | R | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| Adelson | E | P | P | E | P | P | E | P |
| Somerton | P | P | P | E | P | P | P | P |
| Barry | A | P | E | P | R | A | R | --- |
| Alter | P | P | E | P | P | R | P | R |
| Jankovitz | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| Sampson | P | R | P | E | E | P | P | P |
| Suarez | P | E | P | E | P | P | E | P |
| Gómez | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| Michelsen | E | P | P | P | P | P | P | R |

P = Present

R = Remote

E= Excused

A = Absent

--- = not on the commission



County of Santa Cruz

Health Services Agency – Environmental Health

Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission

701 Ocean Street, Room 312, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 454-2022 TDD/TTY – Call 711 <http://www.scceh.org>



FISH AND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION 2024 ATTENDANCE REPORT

| Commissioner | Feb | March | May 2 | May 22 | June | Sept | Nov | Dec |
|--------------|-----|-------|-------|--------|------|------|-----|-----|
| Berry | P | R | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| Adelson | E | P | P | E | P | P | E | P |
| Somerton | P | P | P | E | P | P | P | P |
| Barry | A | P | E | P | R | A | R | --- |
| Alter | P | P | E | P | P | R | P | R |
| Jankovitz | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| Sampson | P | R | P | E | E | P | P | P |
| Suarez | P | E | P | E | P | P | E | P |
| Gómez | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | P |
| Michelsen | E | P | P | P | P | P | P | R |

P = Present

R = Remote

E= Excused

A = Absent

--- = not on the commission